

MEA Bargaining 2025-2026

Session #6

Monday, September 29, 2025

Those present: Pat Barber, Christina Britton, Willie Clark, Valerie Finnegan, Silvana Ianinska, Derek Jensen, Joanna Keovilay, Helen King, Brian Kirchberg, Rob Lyons, Gina Maliniak, Kevin Pendley, Bruce Proud, Sharon Scarbrough, Rachel Sellers, Jon Syre, Evelyn Townsley, Dawn Walker and Mark West.

Meeting began at 5:05 p.m.

MEA proposal.

BP – Hiring schedule - no issues with the .02% between levels. If you want to stop at 21, ok for this year but may need to adjust at some point. Dollar value is based on guesstimates. If you have a better number, we're flexible. Majority of new hires are at the beginning of the schedule. Wouldn't be a cost increase. 5% proposal on schedule for both grandfathered (GF) and performance pay (PP) teachers. PP at \$100 and \$125. Continuing retention. Supplemental schedule at 5% and addition of speech language pathologist (SLP) supplement at \$1000. Had conversation with visual and performing arts (VPA) teachers who were told that there wasn't money available in budget to be paid so need confirmation that's going to happen. A few immediately responded when we communicated with them about rationale for removing VPA from our proposal. Agreement with para step. Cost is different depending on calculations of where people were on schedule in April and those who are newly hired. Retained para longevity at 15+ in our proposal. And estimate of \$113,000 based on where those individuals were on the salary schedule (SS). Beyond that is calculations with benefits. Retained our proposal that the district picks up the increased cost of employee and employer premiums for this year. Cost of that is \$493,680 at 5.5% increase. It certainly would be the expectation that the district would put that money into the plan. Reaffirming that salary increases are retroactive to 7/1/25.

MW – No questions. Pretty familiar with methodology. Give us a few minutes.

Caucus at 5:12 p.m. Reconvened at 5:29 p.m.

MW – Since our last meeting were able to go speak with the 3rd party vendor about health insurance.

Management proposal – health insurance.

CB – Reached out to the broker and reran numbers for us. No plan changes. Cost absorbed by district. Since self-insured health insurance would stay within decent amount. Were able to recalculate reduction to 4%. 4% shared by employee and 4% by district keeping in mind that district contributes about 75% of total premium.

BP – This is using same data points as previous?

CB – Yes, sir.

BP – And these rates are effective in January, correct?

CB – Yes.

BP – Savings to employees of \$372,000?

MW – Correct.

BP - 7.2 to 5.5 to 4 and no plan changes? And impact is on district of not contributing to plan. \$870,000 that district won't put into the plan. And the broker Aon says that ok?

CB – Yes. Based on numbers we ran to as of closeout of claims as of 7/1. Predict through 12/31 what claims will be. Aon predicts that in the next few months we would maintain fund balance within reasonable limits.

RS – At 6/30/26 he said that the plan will be actuarially sound.

BP – Don't have any other questions on insurance.

Management proposal – salary.

MW – Agreed on decompressed placement schedule . . . 4.25% salary increase. PP in agreement.

BP – Not really because we did not have additional amount on GF for PP. In the past we addressed that by saying that anyone less than effective (E) would not receive a salary increase.

MW – If E get same as E?

BP – GF would not be impacted by PP. GF got same as E.

MW – That's what we're saying.

BP – Has always been step movement or percentage increase. This is different from anything we've done in the past. Never a separate dollar value. Don't believe it's required by law. Been doing it forever so we know procedures we've followed won't be subject to challenges. We will have more conversations about that.

MW – Performance, new supplement for SLP and 4.25% supplements. VPA teachers – referendum dollars specifically set aside for VPA are available to be used specifically for that. Those dollars are available for principals to use in regards to that. If need to have conversations, we can do that if principals are not aware.

BP – Pretty sure there needs clarification. Seems that referendum dollars are going to other priorities.

MW – Did not include longevity in regards to paras in this round.

BP – So what's the concern with the para retention supplement?

MW – Want to put dollars on the SS to benefit all paras. That's why we came up with 60 cents per step.

BP – No further questions.

Caucus at 5:45 p.m. Reconvened at 6:39 p.m.

MEA proposal.

BP – Proposal is similar to last but had conversations about your and our proposal. PP – don't believe it's appropriate time to go thru lengthy time of establishing PP in this way. Would require looking at current contract language (CCL) and making modifications to CCL. There is so much that is different around language and implementation. This is a really big issue for those on GF in particular to ensure this doesn't become a weapon in the district and a way of using an evaluation as a weapon. The other change is removal of retention supplement for paras. But we had serious conversations about other bargaining units that have it - in support staff - and why the district would be willing to do it in other places and leave paras on their own without the benefit of longevity in their salary structure. Removed at this time. Expect it to be returned next time in some form or fashion. 4% increase for district and employees for health insurance.

MW- Is that it?

BP – Yes.

MW - Thanks for your proposal and acknowledgment of health insurance premium increase to 4%. Also we did up our proposal on teacher salary which is the bulk of the dollars. You haven't budgeted at all. That is a concern that we have a set number of dollars to spend. It is difficult to reach that.

BP – With the premiums you are not paying, the difference is not much at all. You're not putting \$880,000 into the plan; you had that on the table.

MW- Heard what you said about 5.5%. Our attempt was to get the number down. Disappointing to not see movement.

BP – Can say the same about movement in salary. It's dollars you committed that you are no longer committing.

MW – We don't see it that way.

BP – How could you not?

MW – I don't. We will consider and come back.

Caucus at 6:45 p.m. Reconvened at 7:02 p.m.

Management proposal.

MW – Primary difference between your last and this proposal. In deference to what you said, we took off PP from GF schedule. We're not dealing with any contract issues of changes. Increased to 4.5% for the salary schedule and 4.5% for all supplements we discussed in the past to this point. That puts us over \$10M. Result is a 4.75% overall increase as a raise to MEA employees.

BP – Slightly different numbers in paras step increase. How many paras would receive a step?

MW – Revised calcs – within \$10,000 of what yours was. Used current para numbers we have.

SI – We have just a few more numbers than yours.

BP – That would be the same for 60 cents per step.

MW – That's correct.

BP – No other questions.

Caucus at 7:07 p.m. Reconvened at 7:52 p.m.

MEA proposal.

BP – Proposal is basically the same but reduced to 4.75%. Looking at teacher numbers, we noticed we were using 2 different numbers so I'm not sure. 2601 vs 2500. Not too concerned whether it is 2601 that are eligible. Might need to see data. Same with PP degree. Were one off which could be 744 data that we had showed performance degree at 743 in April. So, if there were that many people that got degrees between April and June or new hires, I don't know. Could have had an impact. Differential supplements – your number is higher. Received different files, not saying it's wrong, would like to see it's not a duplication of something. Those are the changes in our proposal. Looking at 4.75%. Differential supplements. Includes SLPs. Guessing there are more SLPs budgeted now than in April for difference between 33 and 40.

CB – Now sitting at 31. Allocated at 40.

MW – (to team) any questions?

MW – alright. Give us a few minutes.

Caucus at 7:58 p.m. Reconvened at 8:47 p.m.

MW – Went back and caucused. Had to make phone calls.

Management handout.

MW – What we went back and discussed . . . wanted to confirm numbers that we have currently. Can get numbers to you, Bruce. Agree to decompress. 4.75% increase. Performance pay – not including GF. 4.75% degree supplements. Retention. New for SLPs. Step for paras and 60 cents for increase to para salary schedule. In addition to that HI increase for 4% employees and district. Pretty much come to agreement.

BP – Clarify – individuals that are not eligible did not work 99 days last year. Are we moving to decompressed or keeping them where they are?

SI – Would be cleaner to keep them on decompressed. Those hired January onward.

BP – Ok. I think we have an agreement.

MW – Excellent. Thank you.

BP and MW signed compensation agreement as well as health insurance agreement.

BP – What happens next?

SS – Joint statement.

MW – Will let superintendent know and board members.

PB – We normally ask that no one communicate with district and employees until the joint statement is released.

Adjourned at 8:56 p.m.